

Edited Interview with Tommy Smith in the Lord Edward Restaurant (20/7/2007)

Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire (MM) Tommy Smith (TS)

1. **MM:** Where and when were you born Tommy?
2. **TS:** 30th May 1946 in Ship Street, Dublin. Just down the road (laugh).
3. **MM:** And how many in the family?
4. **TS:** Five, three brothers and a sister?
5. **MM:** And what did your father do?
6. **TS:** He was a coach painter in Archers in Sandwich Street.
7. **MM:** And your mother was probably a mother was she (laugh).
8. **TS:** She was mother yeah. She died when I was nine.
9. **MM:** Right and where did you come in the family?
10. **TS:** I was the first, I was the eldest.
11. **MM:** Oh you were the eldest so that put a lot of pressure on you then?
12. **TS:** Kind of, at the time, but my grandmother reared me then you see. She took half of us on and my other grandmother took the other half on so that's how we were reared.
13. **MM:** And did you stay in Ship Street?
14. **TS:** No we were moved down to Ushers Island before my mam died. She had my brother Patrick in the house in Ushers Island, 24 Ushers Island and two years later she died. She never recovered from having Patrick. It was a bad birth. So that's how she died.
15. **MM:** How did you get started in the catering then?
16. **TS:** I used to always work from the time I was ten as a messenger boy in Hayes Cunningham Robinsons in Rathmines.
17. **MM:** The chemists, is it?
18. **TS:** And there was a big purser there and he used to let me come in every summer and Christmas so this Christmas he had a lad that was after staying for the summer and stayed with him, so I had no job. So I was going down to O'Connell Street on 28th December 1960. I was down town and I saw this job in Burgh Quay in the Old Boat Club, and the job was gone, and this messenger boy out of Dunn's the fish messenger said do you want a job. I said yes. He said go down to the Red Bank and I said the bank and he said yeah. So I walked into the Red Bank and I met Joe Duggan who was the second head waiter in the front bar and I asked could I have a job and I was due to go back to work on the 17th January...
19. **MM:** Back to school you mean?

20. **TS:** Back to school, and I went home to the granny and I said 'listen granny, I'm going to get my food and all here, I'm going to get paid, this is great' and she wrote to my father who was in England at the time and he said I could stay. So I stayed in the Red Bank.
21. **MM:** You were twelve years old.
22. **TS:** I was thirteen-and-a-half at the time.
23. **MM:** Wow. You were meant to stay in school until you fourteen wasn't it.
24. **TS:** But it was only six months. I didn't go to school; I was 'mitching' so they didn't care whether I went back or not. I was in *Ard Scoil Éinne* up in Crumlin road, an Irish speaking school yeah.
25. **MM:** Very good. So did it begin. You came in...
26. **TS:** I walked straight in and he started me right away in the front bar with Jimmy and Joe. Jimmy was the head waiter. Jimmy Ellard. He's still gone. Joe is still with us. He (Jimmy) was the head waiter in the front bar and then you had the lovely restaurant in the back, then you had the oyster bar down in the back in the lounge down there.
27. **MM:** And who else was there at the time when you started?
28. **TS:** In the restaurant Tommy Dorney was the head waiter. They had just let Eddie Kavanagh go, he went off out to the airport.
29. **TS:** His brother Bobby went to the Montrose.
30. **MM:** And Eddie went to the airport. Were both of them in the Red Bank originally?
31. **TS:** Only Eddie, Tommy replaced Eddie as head waiter. Bobbie was in the Hibernian at that time, he was one of the head waiters in the Hibernian.
32. **MM:** Bobbie as far as I know is the only waiter in Dublin who had a room named after him.
33. **TS:** That's right the Robert Room in the Montrose.
34. **MM:** And who else.
35. **TS:** Tommy Dorney, the head waiter in the restaurant. Willie Downey was his second head waiter. Then you had Paul Cooke, Hughie Kavanagh and Jimmy Grimes. They were all their senior staff. Jimmy Grimes, he was the oldest of the people there at that time. And then in back bar, in the oyster bar you had Dannie O'Connor and John Nolan.
36. Do you want the bar staff?
37. **MM:** Yes, if you have them.
38. **TS:** The bar staff, Dannie Higgins was the head barman, Tony O'Grady was next and then you had a few *commis* and such like and then you had Charlie O'Leary up in the cocktail bar.
39. **MM:** And tell me about the cocktail bar because at that time cocktails were very, you had the famous cocktail now in Hibernian and Jimmy and George... Earlier than that time there were two famous sort of cocktail waiters there, and then the cocktail competitions and all this stuff.

40. **TS:** That's right, I don't remember now their names exactly. The cocktail bar was very private. You know you went straight in off the street, off D'Olier Street and went straight up the stairs into this very exclusive almost barely lit room and lovely lights behind the bar and Charlie was in charge of that. That was open every night of the week except Monday. So that was the staff now of the Red Bank at that time. Gerry Ferns was the head chef.
41. **MM:** So Gerry was the head chef.
42. **TS:** Brian Kavanagh was the second head chef. They were the two main people and then you had the plethora of Paddy's and Joe's that you didn't know their names like, you know.
43. **MM:** How many would there have been in the kitchen at the time.
44. **TS:** There was six in the kitchen plus May, a cook, and then you had about three or four *commis*.
45. **MM:** So you had the bar when you came in?
46. **TS:** When you walked in you had the front bar when you walked in off D'Olier Street and then the dining room was immediately after that. The dining room would have seated about maybe eighty. Eighty people because there was all lovely booths and everything in it. Lovely booths and...
47. **MM:** Then there was the oyster bar.
48. **TS:** The Oyster Bar in the back that held about maybe twenty people. That was a very exclusive place and the lounge held about fifty, you know, that kind of...
49. **MM:** And would there have been any food served in the bar itself?
50. **TS:** No, nothing, you had the front bar and the oyster bar and the restaurant. There was no such thing as bar food like that.
51. **MM:** And then the cocktail bar upstairs.
52. **TS:** Yeah nothing served up there only cocktails. That only opened in my time.
53. **MM:** And they did lunch and dinner.
54. **TS:** Lunch, dinner and the front bar was open all day.
55. **MM:** And was it busy for lunch?
56. **TS:** Oh very, very busy.
57. **MM:** Busier for lunch or dinner?
58. **TS:** Busier for lunch. Business people, Independent Newspapers were great clients, the Irish Times were great clients. This was all over the house. The high executives in the restaurant. We had the 'hacks' coming in and out to the front bar. It was a great place for the ordinary guy to come into the front bar. You could have your oysters, you could have a mixed grill, you could have anything. A light lunch as I say was eight in six I think it was at the time. That what is was seven in nine and the service charge made it eight in six. That's when they finished up in '69. I went to the Montrose then immediately afterwards I couldn't believe the price of lunch. It was over a pound or something and I couldn't believe it. I rang the Montgomery's and said they were giving the food away!

59. **MM:** Tell us more. What was your first job, you started off as a...
60. **TS:** As a *commis* waiter under Joe Duggan.
61. **MM:** And so what were you doing there, you were polishing glasses and cutlery and...
62. **TS:** For the first week or two and then you were thrown in immediately because it was so busy all day the customers only get up off a chair and another fellow, you had to learn very fast how to run the place with them. I think I was three weeks when I serving *coquille saint Jacques* in the shell. It was the first thing I served I'll never forget it and I was dying to serve the potatoes cause Joe used to be able to like slide the mash off the spoon with his fork and I was dying to do that. So you learn very fast in there. You got a different training in there than you did in the restaurant. In the restaurant you stood by the wall and if the waiter called you and all that sort of stuff. I had training in both of them now but I was always put back in the front bar.
63. **MM:** But the food was in the front bar.
64. **TS:** You got the same kitchen; everything was the same only it was different menu. That was the restaurant menu (pointing to a copy of the old Red Bank menu) as it turned out after the fire, I'll tell you about that in a minute. But you had a big *à la carte* menu for you could have mixed grill, omelettes, anything you liked in the afternoon. You had high teas from 5 pm to 7 pm and...
65. **MM:** When you're talking about the front now are we... Was there a bar that just served drink?
66. **TS:** You just came in off the street. Full bar, no, no that was front bar. Your lounge was at the back of the house in Hawkins Street, off Hawkins Street. You came in off the back from Hawkins Street, Leinster Market. You came in off the... The Royal and the Regal were facing us. And you came in that street there, in that laneway. And the lounge was on your left and the Oyster bar was just across from you. You turned up to walk the hallway and you walked into the restaurant or you walked into the front bar.
67. You could come in either side.
68. **MM:** And tell me something was *Ostinelli's* gone at that stage?
69. **TS:** No *Ostinelli's* was very much there. They were there until about 1964. Yeah *Ostinelli's*. That was on Hawkin Street yeah. And then you had Reilly's beside us the pub next door, Reilly's. That was the Graces (Brendan Grace's family), Graces uncle owned that place.
70. **MM:** Oh that's right because Graces owned.
71. **TS:** That's right that was Graces but they didn't call it Graces, it was O'Reilly's, they kept the name. They had a place down in Pearse Street.
72. **MM:** One of them had trained in the Regal Rooms originally.
73. **TS:** That's right, that's right in the Regal Rooms (laugh) that's right, Phil.
74. **MM:** So basically you got in and you were sort of hands on straight away in there. You learnt the ropes.
75. **TS:** Exactly you learnt the ropes immediately, there was no such thing as mollycoddling, you just got stuck in and then when you were on with Jimmy, like Joe had a half day on a Wednesday and you on with Jimmy. So Jimmy was the head and he didn't want any passengers. You had to get stuck in and that's how you learnt, no messing. There was only another fellow there and myself. We were there for three years, another young *commis*, Peter Brady and he and I were

there for three years on and off going back and forward between the restaurant because they insisted that you learnt how to be in the restaurant and how to hold yourself in the restaurant and Montgomery then as I told you, because you were in the front bar you didn't get the training of normal *commis*. So I was farmed out to the Gresham first, then the Shelbourne.

76. **MM:** So how soon in your training did that happen?
77. **TS:** That happened in 1961 in the summer of '61. Yes it was the summer of '61 because I remember the first place I went to was Jury's hotel around the corner and they asked me to give a hand out in the Copper Room and that was downstairs in Jury's and I went to give a hand but they were very pleased with me and they rang back and said I was very pleased with me and said could I come again if they were short. So Montgomery asked me would I be interested in doing breakfast and I said 'no problem', I didn't know anything about breakfast. But I didn't know you had to start at 6 am. (Laugh).
78. And the first place I ended up was with Ken Besson over in the Hibernian and he was a hard task master. You had to be in and ready with your apron, shiny shoes and your hands out like that for inspection at 6 am. If you were there at 6.05 am you were sent back home no matter whether it was raining or otherwise, you had to learn timekeeping in the Hibernian.
79. **MM:** And who was head waiter in the Hibernian at the time?
80. **TS:** No you were only on the breakfasts you see. You could have anybody. You could have a junior manager, you could have anybody helping you and I was never under a head waiter. The only head waiter I ever worked under was Sean O'Neill in the Gresham and he gave me my station. I was with Mick Dowling there for a good while as well. He was there at that time, the boxer. He was there in the Gresham for a good while and Paddy Roberts was one of the chefs. I think he was a breakfast chef because I got to know him very well because he played with Shells. You walked in and you probably had a fourth year *commis* directing you for the morning cause you wouldn't have the waiters in that hour of the morning. Off you go, get stuck in, up to the breakfast rooms, go into the little pantry. You get a room number, knock at the door and you left it outside the door. You didn't go into the rooms those times. You never, ever went into a room! Not when I went there anyway. And I went to the Shelbourne and it was Claude Spillane. I did a few functions with Claude down in the ballroom and then he got me into the breakfast rooms upstairs. There was a Phil O'Reilly was the head waiter of the breakfast. He was in the Shelbourne. He was a permanent head waiter in the Shelbourne. They had a permanent head waiter, Phil O'Reilly was his name and he was a very strict man. Very, very strict! You had to be on time. Everything was all punctual that time, no such thing as late, no sloppiness, shoes polished; pants shined oh the whole works. It was great training.
81. **MM:** I suppose if you didn't turn up there was plenty of other people to take your place.
82. **TS:** There was loads of people, and the same thing again with waiters if they got fed up of the job, they could leave and go somewhere else. They could be working in the Hibernian tonight, they'd be working in Jammet's and there was plenty of casual work at that time. Like the Dolphin Hotel I worked plenty of times in the Dolphin and...
83. **MM:** It was Nugent owned that was it?
84. **TS:** That's right.
85. **MM:** Did he still have it when you were there? Didn't Eamon Andrews buy it off him or something?

86. **TS:** That was bought in about 1964/'65 Eamon Andrews time coming real well. He brought the Television Club, it was the Four Province at that time and he changed the name after that to The Television Club. Dublin was a great place that time, fabulous place.
87. **MM:** So you were there, how long did you stay in the Red Bank altogether?
88. **TS:** There was a fire in 1961, Easter '61 and it changed the whole complex of the whole place. The kitchen went downstairs, they halved the restaurant and they amalgamated the front bar into the restaurant. The restaurant was ruined then because all you had was bar running through the restaurant and you had the kitchen behind and a little hatch that you opened, Gerry Ferns was mortified having to go in there and all, his kitchen was in there and the cocktail bar was lost. That became the function room and everything else stayed down stairs then. The lounge was okay, the Oyster Bar was alright but the front bar went too, we only had half the restaurant; we lost all the private booths so we lost lots and lots of customers, lots of special customers at that time.
89. **MM:** And where would they have gone now? Would they have moved up to the Russell?
90. **TS:** Well you could have gone to the Russell, Jammet's was still there now at that time and I'll never forget a couple of people coming in. They'd walk in and they'd look around and say 'I will never come back here again, you have cheapened the place'. He put a mural on the wall around things like this. You'd no booths and you became number six, seven and eight and no privacy. The restaurant was ruined. So I stayed till '62. I left there in '62. I went to work in the University Club then and that was a different kind of training again, gentleman's club, different training again. Then I left there and went to Madigan's and then I came back to the Red Bank.
91. **MM:** Now the University Club was on its own still, It hadn't amalgamated?
92. **TS:** Seventeen Stephens Green. No it hadn't, no. It was very much on its own. They were all the bishops and the clergy out of the protestant faith. They all frequented there and all doctors and surgeons and all the rest. That's the kind of people you're dealing with.
93. **MM:** And tell me what was the food like there?
94. **TS:** Gorgeous, gorgeous, absolutely gorgeous.
95. **MM:** Who was the chef do you remember?
96. **TS:** They weren't chefs. I still see the lady, Nora was her name. I never knew her second name. She goes to Whitefriars Street church every morning. Nora. She's a very old lady now but she's not working or anything like that but I still see her and Jean Kelly was the second cook. There was no chefs. John McGettigan was the head waiter in the dining room and then you had girls as well and us *commis* and what have you. But as I said to you it was a different type of training again. All different. Then I worked in the Airport for nine months.
97. **MM:** So you said you went from the university club then to...
98. **TS:** To Madigan's to become a bar man.
99. **MM:** Which Madigan's now?
100. **TS:** That was in North Earl Street with Mick Madigan. Mick Madigan was a friend of my uncles and he said to me you should become a bar man, you want to learn the bar trade so I stayed there for about fifteen or sixteen months and then the Red Bank called me again and I went back down there.

- 101.MM: And how long were you in the University Club?
- 102.TS: I was fifteen months there yeah.
- 103.MM: And the University Club, most of those clubs were renowned for having good wine cellars and stuff like that.
- 104.TS: Oh the best of stuff. I mean I learnt my wines off Joe Duggan in the Red Bank and when I went to the club, I would ring Joe and say I'm after coming across a bottle and I'd give him the name and all the rest and he'd say 'that's such and such a thing, such and such vintage, be careful when you're opening it'. He was a knowledge unbelievable but he helped me many, many (ways), he trained me all the way. I always say he trained me, always, because I got trained in b and c, all round the place, but when I went back, he had patience for you. He taught you everything the way it should be done, you know, that kind of way. So yeah I went to Madigan's and then I went back to the Red Bank.
- 105.MM: So the Red Bank called you back and this is around 1964.
- 106.TS: That was '65.
- 107.MM: Now at this stage I have gone Egon Ronay, I think he came first around '64 or so or the Red Bank had a one star from him. The food seemingly was very good.
- 108.TS: It was very good, top class, top class yeah. Kennedy coming here changed everything.
- 109.MM: Okay yeah.
- 110.TS: President Kennedy when he came here he changed everything. I mean he changed the type of people, the summers became, when Kennedy died in '63 the following summer from Patrick's Day onwards everything changed. We had tourists all the year nearly, up to August/September. When the oysters came back we went back to our normal winter customers. But John Kennedy coming here in '63 changed the tourism of this country. Unbelievable yeah.
- 111.MM: Never thought of that now.
- 112.TS: If you do your homework now you'll find that particular era was an awful time. Sure you might get one or two yanks coming but when he came they couldn't get planes over quick enough. He was the best ad for Ireland that we ever did. We had them all doing their Irish coffees down in Shannon but no, this changed everything. I remember it well because I remember Mr Montgomery saying that this is going to change, well in '64 he said 'this is going to change tourism altogether' he said and everything changed. Then Grace Kelly changed everything as well. She had a big huge impact as well. She came in '61, she stayed in the Hibernian. I had the pleasure of holding a door for her (laugh). In 1961 was with *Bean DeValera* and they went off in the princess car. That was the name of car, the princess car. They were like the old rolls but they didn't have the quality of the rolls and I'll never forget seeing the big P and how appropriate for her and she stayed in the Hibernian but she was a lovely person. Then you had all the stars used to come to the Red Bank.
- 113.MM: From Ardmore studios these ones is it?
- 114.TS: Like Audrey Hepburn's father was the sacristan in Whitefriar Street for ten years and she used to meet her dad down in the Red Bank. I met her a few times and I'd go up and I'd say to her can I get you anything and her father used to come in via Hawkins Street, the bus used to leave him off and all he did was walk in and meet Audrey and off he'd go. He didn't ever have anything. But she'd be sitting there and Deborah Kerr was the loveliest person I ever met. Ah

Robert Mitchum, all the big stars came there, James Mason when the film became big here in '63/'64...

115.MM: They were all here.

116.TS: All came to the Red Bank. I was known as the show business waiter (laugh).

117.MM: What was the other competition at the time?

118.TS: You had the Red Bank, you had Jammet's, you had the Dolphin. The Dolphin was a huge place.

119.MM: What about the Unicorn?

120.TS: That hadn't really taken off at that time. That became a night owl place. People would be leaving the Red Bank and they'd say we'll go up to the Unicorn or we're going to here. There was another place up there. I can't remember that place now. Up around Leeson Street, The Golden Orient, Mike Butt. His son was involved in the Hibernian hotel.

121.MM: David?

122.TS: The new Hibernian. So you had all the, what they did in those times they send one of the waiters out to see who was busy and who wasn't busy. A spying job we used to call it and send him out on a walk for an hour or two.

123.MM: But at this stage now in the '60s what was the, some of the hotels were going down at this stage.

124.TS: Ah yeah they were all starting to go down.

125.MM: The Gresham and the Shelbourne.

126.TS: They were all starting to move down because things were changing. You see you had the opening of the Montrose, no it wasn't the Montrose it was the South County. That was a huge, huge slap in the face to everybody because it gave ordinary people an outlet to get out and eat cheaply and it changed everything in the hotel business. You got ordinary silver. The good cutlery was gone and you went out there and you might get napkins, you might get paper napkins but it brought down the business. You can say what you like about it, it was economic and all this but it brought the standard down. The standard dropped immediately when that came on. Fellows didn't care. They could go out when the Montrose came on. That didn't help at all. They always say that the Burlington and Berkley brought up the standard. It never brought up the standard because they have the standard do you know what I mean. You didn't have the likes of Toddy O'Sullivan, you didn't have the likes of Besson, you didn't have Nugent, Nugent was a very hard man in the Dolphin. Very, very hard man. I mean you could walk in there and he'd look at you and he'd say you didn't polish your shoes today sonny, go home. Imagine meeting a man like that and you after sweating your guts out for the lunch or something and you wouldn't even be working there, I was working in the Red Bank. I was just saying to man here the other night I used to do all these breakfasts and I'd be lucky if I'd get a breakfast. I had to turn up in the Red Bank for 10.30 a.m. and start all over again. Ah I tell you, it was crazy but that's how I learnt my trade.

127.MM: What about the Clarence Hotel?

128.TS: That was wedding hotel. That was the place where everybody really went for a wedding. There was a good standard there now in the Clarence. It was nice for weddings, it was good you know.

- 129.MM: The Four Courts Hotel.
- 130.TS: That wasn't much no, the real chicken and ham, mash and veg and all that sort of stuff. I was in there a couple times, I brought my grandmother in because you could get ordinary food you know what I mean and you'd know she'd eat it.
- 131.MM: The type the normal person would want to eat sort of thing and be happy.
- 132.TS: It was not competition to anybody. No *haute cuisine*. I mean you think the Four Courts is beside it and they all come to the Red Bank do you know what I mean and then the big Hawkins house, when that went up that changed everything in the Red Bank as well, as regards the type of clientele we got because we got all the clientele from RTE. They became our main customers then.
- 133.MM: So RTE was in Hawkins House originally.
- 134.TS: Hawkins House yeah, the office people and they changed the type of customers. They moved out the people from the Irish Time, they moved out the people from the Irish Independent. We'd the like of Ben Kiely, Sean White, John Burns, all reporters, all people that was connected with the press. We had the press around the corner. You had all these people the Times and the Independent, they all came to the Red Bank and these are all the high executives and when RTE came in they started coming in at 12.30 pm and they'd be no tables and that meant the Irish Times and all these people were 'hoosted' out somewhere. So where they went we never knew but RTE over an awful lot. You had the likes for Frankie Burn coming there. Then you had McConnell's (Advertising Agency) coming in because they were associated with RTE.
- 135.And then you had all the McConnell's taking over and they used to take over the lounge of an evening and all the noses were put out then from the people out of the Irish Times and the Press and all these sort fellows. I mean all those people mingled out the Times, the Press, and the Independent. There was none of this snob, there was none of that because we all met them and we had to serve them and it was a great club like you know what I mean. And Dublin didn't become snobby until the late '60s.
- 136.MM: They would have all drank in the Palace and Pearl and...?
- 137.TS: They would have drank everywhere and they'd always start off in the Red Bank because it was the nearest and the fellows in the Irish Press, we had all the reporters, we had everybody coming but as I say then RTE came in, changed the whole, we used to have a lunch menu in the Red Bank and they dismissed it and they all went *à la carte* because it was all on expense accounts. You were getting, in 1964 I was getting £33 wages with tips.
- 138.MM: So RTE had the expense accounts so they were going *à la carte*?
- 139.TS: Whereas the lads in the Irish Times put their hands in their pockets or they might have a small accounts and O'Connells of course then had to go the whole hog. They went big time with their expenses as well. So it became madness. It was madness. I'm not telling you a word of a lie. The wines that walked off the shelves, they were there for years. Then all of a sudden we had to get new wines. Everything changed because these were all on expense accounts.
- 140.MM: Yeah because I remember John Howard saying that when they put an end to the expense accounts I think around 1984/1985 or something like that.
- 141.TS: Charlie Haughey changed that, he took it off fifty per cent first and then the next budget the next year he eliminated it completely.
- 142.MM: And that was the death now of a number of restaurants sort of thing.

- 143.TS: It was, we lost Guinness here, we lost RTE, we lost Irish Distillers. We lost a lot of people over night we lost them. You wouldn't believe it but we always depended on the law courts and they came back.
- 144.TS: That's another thing when I came first it was all judges and lawyers and barristers and then all of a sudden we started getting the business people coming in and they started taking over their tables. And that was the only table you couldn't give away because that was Colm Condon's table, the Attorney General. That was his table, nobody else but all the other tables you could give away and you gave them away to the likes of Irish Distillers, Guinness, RTE, the religious crowd in RTE, Seán Mac Réamain, that was his table there every single day. But that all changed overnight then these all started coming back slowly became their restaurant again.
- 145.MM: Seán died himself.
- 146.TS: He was a lovely man, a lovely fella.
- 147.MM: No I interviewed him, he was a very nice fellow
- 148.TS: Lovely man and he'd always say to the people, I mean he'd only be a guest himself and he'd always say 'look after the lads'. 'We must look after the lads'. He always said that. When he'd be paying himself he'd look after you. But he'd always say 'look after the lads'. Now those times are gone.
- 149.MM: So you're saying the big change there happened. How long did you stay in the Red Bank? When did you go to the Montrose or what was that?
- 150.TS: That was when the Red Bank closed in '69.
- 151.MM: So you stayed, and you went back to the Red Bank in '65 and you stayed there until it closed?
- 152.TS: '67 went off to sea then (laugh).
- 153.MM: Oh you went off to sea?
- 154.TS: It was an ambition of mine to go to sea and I went up to him one day and said Mr Montgomery I said 'I got to get this out of my system' and he said 'off you go'. So I went off in March 1967 and in October 1967 my grandmother got very ill and I was on the ships at this time, the SS Himalaya and my grandmother got very ill and I got a letter to come home and when I saw how ill she was I decided to stay. So I went down to see Joe (Duggan) and said listen Joe I'm back in town. Gran is not very well and just as I was talking to Joe when Montgomery walked in and he said 'I had a row with Willie (that was the second head waiter) last night and I sacked him, do you want his job?' I said, the only time I hesitated, and I knew Willie had six kids, you see, and I said 'are you not going to take him back?' 'Oh he threw a lamp at me' he said. I said 'okay', and he said 'start in the morning'. Now I was only going to stay a couple of weeks but as it happened I left the ships in '67, October '67 and granny lived until eighty-one and died in '81.
- 155.MM: Tell me which company was it you went in?
- 156.TS: The P&O SS Himalaya yeah.
- 157.MM: And where was that sailing from?
- 158.TS: Oh it went all around Europe. All the cruises. I missed the world trip by opening the door for another fellow and let him go in. He was from Newcastle and he was given his tickets to come back in three weeks to go on the world cruise and they said to me you come back on Friday, go down to Tilbury, there's your fare for Tilbury and off you go on Friday. So I was two weeks

on a ship, then you'd run around to another ship and that's how you did it for the six months. I enjoyed it, it really was good.

159.MM: And what was the level of food like?

160.TS: Very, very good. Absolutely gorgeous.

161.MM: Big buffets.

162.TS: Buffets, everything. The people went on a fortnight's holiday that time. There was no such thing as a week. It was a fortnight and you had a family for a fortnight. Very, very good, very nice, the standard of food was absolutely brilliant.

163.MM: Where were the chefs from?

164.TS: All over, all over. The head chef was from, the head waiter was a Mr Shaw and he worked in a place called Top of the Town in London.

165.MM: Right, okay, yes, yes I remember that.

166.TS: Yeah remember that Top of the Town, Talk of the Town and his second head waiter was Peter Gold and he used to lower it (drinking gesture) but it never affected him working. I'd have to admire it but Shaw was a very regimental man. He was an army man and he got a job through a friend of his in the Talk of the Town and he got bored with all the pussy footing around the like of Tom Jones and all this. He couldn't stand that so he gave up his job, getting £2,000 at that time a week, a week, yeah. But he was very regimental but he took me under his wing when I went on the ship, and he trained me, and imagine I never knew his first name in all the time I was dealing with him and he said to me 'when we come back now in October you're going to be my second in command' and I said 'thank you Mr Shaw' and then he brought me the news about my grandmother and we pulled into a little place called Roses in Spain.

167.MM: I know it yeah, I was there recently.

168.TS: Are you serious. I tell everyone it's the loveliest place I was ever. Its up in the north isn't it?

169.MM: Yeah its up in the north, just near the French coast. Ferran Adria has a restaurant called *El Bulli* and its known as the best restaurant in the world and there's this two year waiting list to get there and I got to eat there a month ago, just in Roses.

170.TS: Are you serious. Isn't it a gorgeous place?

171.MM: Beautiful place.

172.TS: I said if I ever got money I'd go back there but I've never gone back. But anyway Mr Shaw and myself anyway we pulled into Roses and on the trip in Tilbury we were going off in the Friday and this lady boarded the ship and she was on her own and she was gorgeous, absolutely the business – plenty of money and everything – and you never knew anything about Shaw. Didn't know if he was married or anything and in Rosses he did a bunk and you know Rosses the ship used be off out and the little boat and her luggage was taken off the ship because she was making some excuse and Shaw's stuff was in with her stuff and he was gone. She'd plenty of money now. He was a lovely, lovely man. I was with him for six months but you don't know people, but talk about regimental! Of course he was gong to make me his second command when we came back but he gave me the news about my grandmother and he knew I wasn't coming back for that particular next trip so that's how my career ended on the ships anyway so I went back to the Red Bank and I stayed there till it finished in '69.

- 173.MM: It's just funny you're talking about the second in command there who was fond of the jar and stuff. Was there much of that now say in the Red Bank or?
- 174.TS: No, no it was in the hotels in the old days. I saw fellows coming down from room services, the back stairs and wine buckets and they'd be drinking bottles of gin and vodka. They couldn't be detected and I didn't know it. I thought it was water, didn't know what they were drinking. But the lads weren't long telling me where to look for the bottles and everything else or it was a terrible craze at that time. A terrible, terrible thing and lots of them and the different ways they were able to manoeuvre to get drink and everything you know. It was different times but they all managed to keep their jobs though (laugh).
- 175.MM: It was a different ethos or whatever.
- 176.TS: It was a different time.
- 177.MM: Yeah, yeah. It's funny. But there was no problem with that in the Red Bank?
- 178.TS: Funny enough the Red Bank was super clean. They was no scandal, there was nothing about anybody. It was a super place, it was a lovely place, a real family place and everybody was there, was there real long.
- 179.MM: Is it Barry Montgomery who was running it?
- 180.TS: Barry Montgomery was running it and his wife Joan. They did the office work and they came down every evening and he did 'mine host' in the restaurant every evening and he had Geraldine, his daughter took over the 'mine host' for a while, Eithne went into the kitchen, his eldest daughter and you had Paul he became a solicitor, he was in here sometimes and Deirdre went off to London. There was five in the family and Mary went off to Canada that's right.
- 181.MM: But the fact that you're saying that one of his daughters went into the kitchen, that would have been quite unusual at the time of girls going in?
- 182.TS: Well you see...We had cooks all the time. You always had a lady cook but May just happened to be, May lived down in George's Street. She was the cook for the time and then May got very sick and Eithne stood in for a while and she was under Brian Kavanagh's wing because Brian was the second head chef and Gerry wasn't, didn't like Eithne coming in at all to be honest with you because he felt she was a plant. But Eithne was only coming in to help and Brian took her under the wing and he trained but he didn't train her for our situation, he trained her for the lunches.
- 183.MM: When you talk about the cooks, what sort of work did the cooks do as such?
- 184.TS: The vegetables for the next day and all the cabbage, the bacon, the joints, all the main joints for the day on the *table d'hote* menu in the restaurant and the front bar.
- 185.MM: So they do basic, ordinary cooking.
- 186.TS: Ordinary cooking, Gerry dealt with all that menu there, yeah, and the one in the Oyster Bar. You didn't ask, you didn't ask Gerry to cook roast beef or anything like that at all. No that was Brian's job and May's job.
- 187.MM: So basically the carvery or any of that sort of stuff was done by the cook? And then as you say this sort of *à la carte*, the French trained stuff, that was...
- 188.TS: That was his (Gerry Ferns).

- 189.MM: You were saying Jean Retty (Previous head chef and manager) left?
- 190.TS: Jean was gone when I got there.
- 191.MM: Right okay. You mentioned there that Jean Reddy moved back to France. Was he from France?
- 192.TS: He went to work in the south of France. He was from France. But he bought a restaurant. He was in a place called Lyon and then he moved down to where all the rich people are, Monte Carlo, not Monte Carlo. Just outside of Monte Carlo, this side of Monte Carlo because the visitors were all going by and he bought the place there and Jimmy (Duggan) used to visit him and Jimmy spent three weeks holidays every year with him and worked with him in the restaurant. Whether he was a help or not or a hindrance, but Jimmy didn't drink and that was a big thing. I never drank. Jimmy never drank, that stood to him because when he went to France, he was able to stay for three weeks on his feet and nobody was going to worry that he was going to fall down half drunk from drinking the wines. So that's how Jimmy was there.
- 193.MM: And Jean Retty was married to an Irish girl was he?
- 194.TS: I think he was yeah. I didn't know much about him, all I knew that Jimmy went down to him. I think she was Irish alright because Jimmy used to get on very well with her. Jimmy wasn't married, he was one of these carefree fellows. He was up in his motor bike and his three weeks in France and that was it. You had to take your holidays that time when you were told to them. He was the head waiter, he could take his holidays but you could get your holidays anytime and you took them all at the one time. No such thing as spacing them out.
- 195.MM: And the busy time now, like you were busy a lot of the time?
- 196.TS: All the time, you were never slack. The front bar was always busy because it had a turn around from 12.30 p.m. when it opened until 10.15 pm to 10.30 pm when it closed.
- 197.MM: But did you guys get extra busy then spring show week, horse show week, all that stuff?
- 198.TS: Oh you had Patrick's Day was the busiest day in the place after Christmas. That was the start of it Patrick's Day, the dog show, the horse racing, then you used to have the Phoenix Park and you had Wednesdays night up there in the summer, they'd be packed.
- 199.MM: That was horse racing?
- 200.TS: Oh yeah, then you had the horse show, the spring show, you got no time off in those times. You got no time off in Christmas week. You had to work. We used to go into the Scotch House for a sandwich. They used to do lovely sandwiches there in Scotch House and had a cup of tea and a sandwich.
- 201.MM: Where was the Scotch House?
- 202.TS: Just at the corner there, around the corner from the Irish Press at the end of Hawkins Street, at the very end of Hawkins Street, down at the end. Yeah Scotch House was there.
- 203.MM: So what happened that the Red Bank close or why did it close?
- 204.TS: John Byrne came on the scene and he built a bit sky scraper on top of the street where you see the big Guinness sign and that became a restaurant on the top floor. Bobby Kavanagh opened that and...

- 205.MM: Now who was this John Byrne fellow?
- 206.TS: John Byrne was the builder, Kerry and he was buying the block, he was buying up the block of D'Olier Street and that was his main stay from the start you see. And he went along the people in the street to buy up their property and he came to the Red Bank and Montgomery wouldn't sell to him, just out and out wouldn't sell and he said he wasn't going to give to something like that and that was all going to be kind of offices I suppose so he sold it to the Blessed Sacrament Fathers for £96,000 or something at the time.
- 207.MM: So Byrne managed to buy all the way up to him.
- 208.TS: No it stopped. When the Red Bank refused that put an end to it. He only came looking, knocking at doors and when Montgomery and the little kiosk in the Hawkins buildings that was D'Olier Buildings that was right beside the Tedcastle Coal Company. It was a gorgeous building, the stuff inside and there were solicitors all in those offices and that little kiosk wouldn't sell either. It was a goldmine and she had a lease in that place for a long, long time and they didn't go and so herself and the Red Bank were the ones that kind of scoop of the whole block moving along.
- 209.MM: Tell me about that restaurant that Byrne...?
- 210.TS: He opened a restaurant on the top and the lift went from the bottom up to the top and it opened in November and we had the worse storm in the history of Dublin. The Liffey overflowed, and they had a big brand new lounge downstairs in the basement. It's still there now but the Liffey overflowed and went down into the thing and it stopped the people going up, the lift couldn't go up stairs either. So the smell and everything, the place was closed. They opened and closed the same day.
- 211.MM: Right and there was another, there was a restaurant on the ground floor as well was there later on or...?
- 212.TS: They had more or less, it was gone then. It was no threat to anybody after that. That was the lounge. There was a lounge upstairs just as you walked in off the street. A kind of an ordinary lounge.
- 213.MM: But this was going to be all and...
- 214.TS: You'd the view. You had the view over Dublin. I was up there because I went up to look for a job up there.
- 215.MM: What was the name of it do you remember?
- 216.TS: That now I couldn't tell you. If I lived to be a hundred more years I could not tell you that.
- 217.MM: And Bobby Kavanagh. You don't know who the chef was?
- 218.TS: I couldn't tell you anything like that because it was my first time meeting Bobby Kavanagh and I went up to put my name forward for a job because I didn't know I was going to be made a waiter in the Red Bank you see. Well he said leave your name with the girl outside and we'll see from there. And little did I know. I left him and I went to a fellow called Robert he ended up being the head barman in Montrose. I can't think of his second name now. He was real smart as well, leave your name and number there and we'll get in touch with you. Little did they all know they'd be out of a job the next day! The very next day!
- 219.MM: It did open. It was open for a while but it didn't last long.

- 220.**TS:** When they got everything fixed up it opened but nobody went up then. Everything was gone. The momentum was gone. They opened a restaurant then out in a, half way up to the airport there in the ...
- 221.**MM:** The Regency?
- 222.**TS:** Yeah where the Regency was. It was called, I can't remember what it was called and they put a restaurant up in the very top in that place in that time.
- 223.**MM:** This was the Crofton Airport?
- 224.**TS:** The very place and they had a lovely (view) that took over from that. They got the idea and they jumped in and they did very well.
- 225.**MM:** Because there would have been a good view there of the top of the hill?
- 226.**TS:** And you went up in a lift again. And Bobby Kavanagh went up there (laugh). So Bobby was up there for a little while and then as I say the South County and then he went to his brother out to the airport. I was out in the airport for nine months on a Sunday. I only worked on a Sunday in the airport under Jack Doyle. Fine head waiter.
- 227.**MM:** Now Opperman was the head man out there. Johnny Opperman would have been out at the airport and Jimmy Flahive would have been executive chef and was Jimmy Kilbride there?
- 228.**TS:** Opperman was the chef in down here in Jury's.
- 229.**MM:** There was a few. Johnny Opperman his brothers...
- 230.**TS:** He had three or four brothers but Johnny was the main man in the airport at that time. I don't know how he was doing that because he used to be in Jury's as well.
- 231.**MM:** No he started off in the Moira.
- 232.**TS:** That's the other place I worked as well. I did morning work there, Trinity Street.
- 233.**MM:** His brother (Willy) took over from him when he went to airport his brother took over from him in the Moira.
- 234.**TS:** The Oppermans were always involved in Jury's, always involved down there. Always involved there.
- 235.**MM:** He's ninety years old now, Johnny Opperman.
- 236.**TS:** Is he still alive?
- 237.**MM:** He lives out in Blainroe. A lovely man, I talked to him recently.
- 238.**TS:** He was a great friend of Bobby Howick. Bobby Howick was a Guinness man. He was the PR for Guinness's and he used to do the oyster festival and they did all kind of festivals. Bobby Howick was the main man. You had everybody else but Bobby Howick was mister personality of this town at that time. And if Bobby Howick said Jury's was a good hotel, that's all he had to say. The Red Bank, he used to love the Red Bank. But that was the main man. Opperman and himself were great pals and he very suddenly died in 1968, Bobby Howick, no, no, it was... Bobby died in the early '80s.

- 239.MM: So tell us between it shut down...
- 240.TS: It shut down in 1969. April '69.
- 241.MM: Why did they shut down?
- 242.TS: They got old.
- 243.MM: None of the family wanted to take it over?
- 244.TS: None of the family. They all had their own lives then you see. Geraldine was after marrying an architect. Mary was gone off to Canada. Mary was finishing school and she was doing something in London and then Eithne got married and her husband lived in Waterville. He was a fisherman. He was connected to the fishing fleet stuff down there and Paul was doing the law so there was nobody to take over from them so that's why they really sold because they were after getting old now, they really did get old, and they were there everyday, all day except Sunday.
- 245.MM: It takes its toll.
- 246.TS: It did take its toll and we were open every day of the week for lunch and every day for dinner and I said to you the front bar went all day, all the time and then after the fire in '61 the restaurant became open all day with the bar so we became the restaurant bar.
- 247.MM: But there was still quite a good business up until to the end, was there?
- 248.TS: Absolutely fantastic, because the night times change. The lunches were great. The night life had changed completely and you had a disco next door to us called Sloopy's and that didn't help the night business and then of course Jammet's was gone and Jammet's went because they saw the signs were coming as well. All the signs were coming and then Montrose opened.
- 249.MM: What I understand from talking to Jammet's is that they realised that a lot of people who lived in the city centre were moving out to the suburbs. And they couldn't get parking and all of these things.
- 250.TS: That's the next thing I was going to say to you. You could park across over the Irish Times, you couldn't park there anymore then. They put the meters and they all went down Townsend Street. I mean they killed, that the night trade but lunchtime, very, very good. I mean McConnell's were still there, RTE were still there and we were still doing that kind of business but all of a sudden the wages dropped from big wages to kind of ordinary wages because we were getting no night trade which was always busy on a Saturday night no matter happened. If a bomb fell you still were busy on a Saturday. It was just a tradition that people came to the Red Bank on a Saturday. Absolutely flying and then you had, as I said to you, all the show business people used to come and you be busy one night. These all started coming at night time then the middle of the week, the law library. The likes of Colm Condon he came quite often, Seamus McKenna, all the big noises in the law firm at that time. They all started coming at night time to the Red Bank.
- 251.MM: And where did you go to the from '69 onwards?
- 252.TS: Oh I went to the Montrose and then I was there and then I went to the County Club in Churchtown.
- 253.MM: How long were you in the Montrose for?
- 254.TS: Six months there. I applied for a job in the County.
- 255.MM: And what was it like to work for PV Doyle?

- 256.TS: It was different.
- 257.MM: I believed he paid quite well but expected, he paid you quarter more than anyone else but expected you to do twice the work or something?
- 258.TS: My wages dropped from the time the Red Bank I never got paid as well, ever, ever again, never. Even coming here I never got paid as well because at that time you had to equalise everything. Like the wages were fantastic, like £33 without your tips in 1964 when the average wage was £8 a week for the average worker. My father had to work two jobs to get £10 and...
- 259.MM: You're on £33.
- 260.TS: In 1964...
- 261.MM: And tips.
- 262.TS: And tips.
- 263.MM: Which would have been half that again if not more?
- 264.TS: Well you see the tips are divided, the three on the night or the four was on they were all divided and if you didn't come out with £20 a week there was something wrong.
- 265.MM: So it was a great job?
- 266.TS: It was a fantastic job, money wise and happiness, you know.
- 267.MM: Now was that just the waiters, the chefs wouldn't be paid anything like that.
- 268.TS: No the chefs got their wages. There was no such thing as back room service. That all came in about '75 when that big fellow in the...Jury's, the start of that. The big chef there was big medallion and he changed everything. He wanted two-and-a-half service back room staff and that came on into Jury's and the service charge became 15% instead of 12.5%.
- 269.MM: Not Willie Marshall now?
- 270.TS: No, no, I can't think of his name, he's a big, big tall and he ended up leaving Jury's and he went out on his own. He got the medal for the best chef in Ireland. Mc Sweeney, was it Mc Sweeney?
- 271.MM: Ah Eugene Mc Sweeney, right Eugene Mc Sweeney.
- 272.TS: He started this 2.5% back room service in the Jury's and that changed in everything, in the Berkley, in the bar at the Berkley Court they all got that as well.
- 273.MM: And was that in the old Jury's?
- 274.TS: The New Jury's – The Intercontinental, Jury's was gone then, yeah Jury's was gone. The Moira was gone. They were all gone.
- 275.MM: So you moved from the Montrose...?
- 276.TS: To the Country Club in Churchtown.
- 277.MM: Now that was big at the time?

- 278.**TS:** Oh it was a huge. No, this was only a restaurant.
- 279.**MM:** No it wasn't the cabaret place?
- 280.**TS:** No it wasn't the cabaret, I wasn't there for that. I left before it came that.
- 281.**MM:** Did that become the Braemor Rooms?
- 282.**TS:** That became the Braemor Room. Ned Finnegan owned it and when Ned sold it to the Quinn's and the Fitzgerald's they bought it, the meat people up in the North somewhere, Hanley Foods. They bought it, they all worked there and the Quinn's, Pat Quinn's uncle they bought the County Club and they changed it then...
- 283.**MM:** Now the County Club what was it like?
- 284.**TS:** It was a restaurant, a pub and a restaurant.
- 285.**MM:** Who was the chef there do you remember?
- 286.**TS:** The chef was Joe, he's long dead. The second head chef is now the head chef over in the Lobster Pot, Don Mc Guinness; he's the head chef there now. He was the second head chef with Joe. I can't think of his second name. Joe Reilly. He left the county and went to work in the hotel down there in Rathgar, at the corner. Orwell Lodge he went there. He left the County, then we had a fellow called Kelly he took over and Don stayed as his second head and then Don kind of took over.
- 287.**MM:** How long were you there?
- 288.**TS:** I was fifteen months there and then I went back to the Montrose. I met Bobby Kavanagh in town one day and he said 'come back to me and I'll make you one of my head waiters' and after a couple of weeks I said 'okay' and Tommy McEvoy got in there before and brought me up to the second head waiter down to the Tara Towers so I was there for another fifteen months. I didn't like it at all. I was restaurant trained not hotel trained. I mean I went to the hotels to do my breakfast training and all that, I did nothing else in hotels. Huge difference.
- 289.**MM:** Explain the difference like.
- 290.**TS:** Standards were terrible, the standards of waiting was bad, the standards of head waiters was bad. The food was completely different. I would never equate anything like with the Red Bank or Jammet's. I worked in Jammet's for a while now helping that lady, I can't remember her name for the minute. She used to call Mr Montgomery and ask was Tommy busy and I'd go up and help them out if we weren't busy and the standard of food you couldn't equate. There's no comparison nowadays. You read these magazines, you read all these things, there's no comparison. Gerry Ferns in the Red Bank and the man in Jammet's, they know how to cook.
- 291.**MM:** Vincent Dowling wasn't it.
- 292.**TS:** Oh. Vincent, the very man, very good, very good. They knew their business and the people in charge knew their business, you know. They didn't stand looking. You were meant to do a job, you do the job and you were trusted to do that and that's the way it was. Nobody stood over you. I couldn't believe when I went back to the Red Bank, there was no one hanging over me compared to breakfasts all the head waiters would be all over you and you're coming down, where were you? and all this and you'd meet Ken Besson and he'd stand, and Toddy would stop you and all this sort of stuff.

- 293.MM: From there you came to here then?
- 294.TS: No I went to work on a ship, I went to work in a factory in Dun Laoghaire because I got so disillusioned. I got so disillusioned in the Tara Towers I wasn't allowed service. I was meant to stand at the door. PV Doyle came in one night and said 'why aren't you at the door?' and I said 'there's people need to be served'. 'No, you stand at the door' but I said 'the people need to be served'. 'You stand by the door and greet the customers'. I couldn't understand that. That was a waste of talent. I was a working head waiter and McEvoy came in one day and said 'Mr. Doyle is at the door, he's giving out stink because you're not standing at the door'. I said 'Mr McEvoy', I said, 'the place is packed, they need hands in their helping' and he said 'you stand by the door'. I wasn't able to do that so I left a little while after.
- 295.I went to work, a customer gave me a job in Upright's in Dun Laoghaire as a van driver. I did that for fifteen months and then I was sweeping up the yard one day, put my van away and there was all leaves around and I said 'Jesus if any of the lads come out on that they'd slip' and I started picking them up and I said to myself 'do you know what? I've had enough of this now. I'll see what's going on', and I went home to my grandmother for my dinner and she said 'Joe Duggan was looking for you'. And I said 'Joe' and she said 'yeah' and I rang Joe and he said 'will you go down and see Tom Cunniam in the Lord Edward?' and I knew Mr Cunniam from the Red Bank, and I was here the night this place opened with Joe in 1969 when they got all their family and friends and Tom Cunniam offered me the job here, late '75 yeah and I came here then.
- 296.MM: This place (The Lord Edward) opened in '69.
- 297.TS: September '69 / October '69.
- 298.MM: So this place nearly opened nearly straight away after the Red Bank closed?
- 299.TS: The Red Bank closed in April and this fellow got wind that it was closing and he was in like a flash. They'd seven tables and if you came in that door there, and this was the opening part and these were the tables. (pointing to tables in the restaurant) A table there, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Seven tables is all they had and this was all closed and they had a long trolley there and a table and if you were stuck you pushed the table. But that was only the first, I was only here a couple of nights and Joe and he offered me the head waiters job, I said 'Joe £20 is not good enough'. And I said 'no Joe I'll leave it' and that's when I went Montrose. I was a bit young to take over a head waiters' job because head waiters...
- 300.MM: But Gerry Ferns was here?
- 301.TS: Gerry came as chef.
- 302.MM: How many were in the kitchen?
- 303.TS: There was only three at that time. Rory Barry and Mick Fletcher. They were two *commis* of his in the Red Bank, and he brought those rather than brining in a head chef. The other head chef was (inaudible).
- 304.MM: And who came here with..?
- 305.TS: Joe Duggan.
- 306.MM: Joe Duggan came in as head waiter.
- 307.TS: No Joe came, yeah he just came in and there was Tony Hayden, he brought Tony Hayden out of the lounge, he became a waiter here. He brought Joe, you see they weren't doing much at the time and then a fellow, then another lad came in, I don't know what his name was and they

were only helping. Joe used to come in at night to do the nights, to do four nights and then they got a lad called Tony Burtonshaw and he was the head waiter.

308.MM: Was he one of the Burtonshaw's to do with Paddy Burtonshaw and all of them. There was a Burtonshaw he was the head chef or manager in the Savoy restaurants.

309.TS: I wouldn't know now. Tony's dad now ended up buying a guesthouse up in Gardiner Street, the top end facing the church. But he took over as head waiter here and did he brought Frank Carney and did he got Noel Ryan and then he got Philip Conway and they were the four that was here running the place when it got busy then.

310.MM: So Eamon Ingram came here then after Gerry died?

311.TS: No, no used to do casual. Gerry used to get a bit sick, he was getting old and they...

312.MM: Was Eamon still in the Russell at the time?

313.TS: Eamon was still in the Russell and he'd do the casual here and when I came in 1975 Eamon came permanently in 1976 or 1977. He was here for all the years after that.

314.MM: And who was with him here?

315.TS: Mick Fletcher.

316.MM: Ah right, the same lad.

317.TS: Another fellow. Mick Fletcher was here and then he left, he bought a restaurant round in the corner down in Meath Street. Breakfast and café kind of thing. He left here for that. His wife and himself. They didn't have any family. He wanted something for her to do so he bought the place around the corner so it got kind of busy and they stayed and then he went around there so then Eamon became head chef. Then he brought Gary and then they've only another of couple of lads up there now and that's it.

318.MM: And Gary's surname again.

319.TS: Gary Dunne; to remember all the names (laugh).

320.MM: Sorry you mentioned Dunne, what was the link between the Dunn's and you know the Dunn's Seafood.

321.TS: Oh the Dunn's, Peter Dunn. They delivered all the fish to the Red Bank and...

322.MM: But did they have an interest in it?

323.TS: No, no they were just the fish merchants. They supplied all the restaurants in Dublin at the time. They were the best fish merchants at the time. The big abattoir kind of place in Manor Street where all the fishing was done.

324.MM: They did the smoked salmon?

325.TS: Ah everything, that's right and they had the little shop then in the top of D'Olier Street.

326.MM: They're up in Finglas now. They moved up to Finglas.

327.TS: They don't own it at all now, they sold it.

- 328.MM: Did they yeah.
- 329.TS: Oh they sold it about three years ago. I had his daughter in here last Christmas and she told me oh no daddy's not there anymore now.
- 330.MM: What he was telling me the stained glass windows that were in the front doors of the Red Bank was up in the factory.
- 331.TS: He actually told me that. They were lovely people as well the Dunn's. They were lovely, lovely, Peter Dunn. He was a lovely man. His family now are all grown up again and nobody wanted it, so good luck, God bless.
- 332.MM: So this place hasn't really changed since...
- 333.TS: It hasn't changed one iota, except his brother-in-law came from America and told him how to make this the entrance and put three more tables in there. That's the only change. That became the entrance then and he put the extra tables in there.
- 334.Tom Cunniam, it's a Mayo name. It's from the time of the famine.
- 335.MM: Did someone else own it before him though?
- 336.TS: No this was built in 1875 by his dad. There was a pub always here for four of five hundred years, a tavern, not a pub and when they used to come from town there was a horses trough up there and they used to stop here for a little libation in here and then the next stop was Dolphins Barn, and that was it, the country. So this was built then in 1875 by the old Tom Cunniam and these were the bedrooms. This was the bedroom, overhead was the bedrooms and the two offices were bedrooms. There was eleven in family and down stairs where the lounge is was their living quarters and the pub was where they made the living.
- 337.And he married a lady from down the road, a pub called down was called Cole's and he married Ms Cole, a lady down there Ms Cole, Ms Cole and he married her and she came in here and she, believe it or not, was the one who brought the business in here, down in the pub. She was the...
- 338.MM: The brains or the...?
- 339.TS: The personality. She was the personality. They all came. She was a lovely, lovely lady. I met her many, many times over the years, many times apart from here, at the Red Bank and that, you know. So they were lovely people the Cunniam's, they were lovely, lovely people and he married in 1961 or 1962 to Blanche Kelly, the model. All the models, Grace O'Shaughnesy, all those girls. Nuala Donnelly, she was in RTE, and they were all a gang of girls at that time, they were all the famous models at that time and he married her. His brother worked in Guinness's and he got the Guinness's coach and brought her down.
- 340.I wasn't here for that but they used to come to the Red Bank, all the family came to the Red Bank, the Kelly's, that was her family and they all came to the Red Bank way, way before I ever went there and they were regular customers and they were one of the few that came back to the Red Bank after the fire. The Red Bank was only closed for a little while after the fire. They opened very quickly afterwards, and the first song that was sung there was 'Forty Shades of Green' when they had the band up and the night it opened, they had the band up in the new room, function room and a band played and the first song that was sang was 'Forty Shades of Green'. I'll never forget that.
- 341.MM: But this place then became, because in the '70s you had all the (other) places shut down. The Red Bank was gone, the Jammet's was gone, and the Russell was gone?
- 342.TS: Everywhere was gone. No decent restaurant.
- 343.MM: This was the only decent restaurant really left in Dublin?

- 344.TS: This was it.
- 345.MM: What was the likes of Snaffles and all that sort of stuff. What where they like?
- 346.TS: Snaffles was very good. John and Danny and Hughie out of the Red Bank opened Snaffles under Mrs Fitzgerald. They were the tea people down in West (inaudible) Street. Fitzgerald's teas and wines, the wine merchants.
- 347.MM: So there was a link between the Red Bank then and Snaffles as in staff wise?
- 348.TS: Exactly, three lads went up there and they took one of the chefs, one of the chefs, I'm not sure whether it was... Brian didn't go there, Brian went out to somewhere out in Howth. There was a new place up in Howth came...no, this was out in Sutton - Sutton House. That became a place for the likes of Haughey and all that, but died very quickly afterwards and then you had the King Sitric opened then in about 1970.
- 349.MM: And then you had John Howard in the Coq Hardi?
- 350.TS: John Howard then in the Coq Hardi and then that type of restaurant started coming along. That was all the late, the middle '70s.
- 351.MM: Yeah and what was the other fellow now that opened there on, it was on School House Lane you know where the Passport Office is on Molesworth Street, off Molesworth Street. There was a place there called the Soup Bowl. Peter...
- 352.TS: Oh the Soup Bowl I'd forgotten about that place.
- 353.MM: Peter Powrie or something like that.
- 354.TS: I can't remember that now, that kind of went by me that kind of time alright yeah.
- 355.MM: So you had the Soup Bowl, you had Snaffles, Snaffles was on Leeson Street.
- 356.TS: Snaffles lasted for twenty-five years.
- 357.MM: I thought there was Tinne or something who owned that there?
- 358.TS: It was taken over much later. You had Tinne's. They were related to Mrs Fitzgerald, she left that to them. She left that to Hugh Tinne. That was his aunt and she kind of lost interested in it in about three or four years and she handed it over to Hugh and then they were running it for a long time then.
- 359.MM: The next one I see now around that time was the Celtic Mews.
- 360.TS: The Celtic Mews, that Joe Gray out of Jury's. He was the head waiter in Jury's in the Copper Room. Another very hard task master but a gentleman. He always reminds me of Mr Shaw and Mr Shaw reminds me of him but he opened the Celtic Mews and that became a big, big hit with the people.
- 361.MM: Because I have a book from I think it was 1981, *TWA Guide to European Cities* and there's only two listing in it for Dublin, that's here (The Lord Edward) and the Celtic Mews.
- 362.TS: That was about right at that time alright yeah. We didn't get people, we couldn't take them we used to send them over there and they used to do visa versa with us. That's how it worked with the two families believe it or not.

- 363.MM: Was there anyone else until the next one I see after that like from what I see now I see okay Guilbaud's opens up around '85 and then you had then the likes, you had Mervyn Stuart out in the Guinea Pig and you had the *Mirabeau*. Did you ever do anything out there?
- 364.TS: No when I came here that was it and Mervyn Stuart, they were a kind of a click here and the Grays, they were all a click with Mr Cunnam and they started off the golfing society and Henry O'Neill. Do you remember O'Neill he had a place out in Lucan. He had a lovely place out there actually and they all became a click and they started the golfing society and then a lot of other fellows joined on then, John O'Byrne and all that. That's another place, Dobbins, that was a new place that came on the scene as well.
- 365.MM: Did O'Byrne now train in Jammets?
- 366.TS: That's right yeah, John O'Byrne.
- 367.MM: He opened Dobbins, so that opened up around that time.
- 368.TS: His brother owned that place. He was in South Africa and John was the front man, you know that's how that worked.
- 369.MM: And then because I'm trying to think after than then really, nothing happened to them the mid '80s and you've the likes of Colin O'Daly opening up 'The Park' out in Blackrock and you've then sort of Kevin Thornton opens up 'The Wine Epergne' and then and Alan O'Reilly opened up 'Clarets' just a few places like that and then *l'Ecrivain* opened up.
- 370.TS: And Chapter One. The Old Dublin was around here for a while.
- 371.MM: What was the Old Dublin like? Was it sort of Russian?
- 372.TS: And Bavarian and all that sort of stuff but that died after a while. It just died because they ended serving ordinary food because they ended up putting coddle on it and stews and all that sort of stuff.
- 373.MM: What's his name again?
- 374.TS: Eamon Walsh. He's gone. That's gone, because they closed the Old Dubliner.
- 375.MM: But it was him. He's got a company now Swift Foods. They produce vac packed or *sous-vide* food.

Discussion on the background of the closure of the Old Dublin

- 376.MM: From your experience the thing that killed fine dining, what killed fine dining in Dublin?
- 377.TS: Standards, just standards.
- 378.MM: You said that PV Doyle opening up had a big effect?
- 379.TS: A huge effect. And people's accounts there, the expense accounts that stopped it.
- 380.MM: How about the troubles?
- 381.TS: No,..I was going to tell you a quick story there. The night the bombs were in Dublin here in '74. The British Ambassador was sitting here (laugh), believe it or not, were sitting there, a party of six. Mr Cunnam told us, and I was here one night and he was telling me and he said 'Jesus

Tommy, the night the bombs went off in Dublin, we had your man here and Jesus, I was watching the door and I watching this. Gunmen were everywhere’.

382.I had Turkish people her last night. I didn’t know they were, I thought they were Italians. They were very demanding and there was ten of them and next thing this fella came in and he said ‘is everything alright?’, he said ‘we’re the bodyguards’ and I said ‘who are these’. He says ‘the Turkish embassy’. I nearly got sick. You would want to see the gun he had. He shows me the gun and I said ‘ah Jesus, I want me out of here’ (laugh).

383.Peter Mandelson is going by here one day, he’s in Newman House, the place is after being cased three days beforehand under the manhole, John O’Donoghue was telling us this, and Mandelson is going by in the taxi, Mandelson going by and he said ‘stop, I want to go in there, I used to eat my oysters in there when I was a student, I want to go in here’. Next minute they all stop and they come in here and he’s sitting down and he’s eating, having oysters and talking to fellows, there’s an awful panic, Jaysus wept, they’re all over Newman House. Next minute (sirens) and he’s sitting there as happy as Larry, had a dozen oysters and a pint of Guinness and then he goes off to Newman House and I swear to God you wouldn’t believe it but all the guys were there, all of a sudden there’s loads of, he just sat there grinning.

384.MM: But you were saying before that all the film stars used to come here as well?

385.TS: Lots of film stars, Paul Newman came, Peter O’Toole, Cyril Cusack, all the guys, anybody that was anybody used to come here and in the Red Bank. The Red Bank was a great place for them. I’ll tell you a quick story Robert Mitchum came into the Red Bank. He had his meal in the restaurant, a real gentleman. He walked down into the bar and he’s having a few drinks and then all of a sudden Luke Kelly walks in, Ronny Drew walked in, here was here yesterday. Ronny Drew walks in and a few more comes in and then Jimmy Campbell comes in from the Royal right, he was a band leader, and they were making, what were they making. It wasn’t Ryan’s Daughter, it was weird, a good long, long time ago now but Robert Mitchum was very young in the part, very young at the time. I think it was ‘A Terrible Beauty’ he was making with Richard Harris, anyway that’s what it was. And they were here and Luke Kelly came in and a few more of them came in and Luke was very, very young now. But this woman came in, for the life of me I can never think of her name but anyway a sing song started and of course they’re all there and the lounge in packed and they’re all having a great time and all the lads from McConnell’s were all there, everybody was coming in. The Royal and Regal were still there now at the time right, and what’s his name comes in and he says, Ronnie Drew, not Ronnie Drew, Luke Kelly, very, very young now, a fabulous voice. They (Dubliners) hadn’t started. They used to come into the Red Bank and the lounge all the time when they started first. They used to come into us and go across to O’Flynn’s across the road and Mooneys and the next thing Robert Mitchum was on the floor, out of his tree, you’d want to see this big actor, and do you know who is was, Con Houlihan.

386.MM: Right he’s a big man, Kerry man?

387.TS: He was very young at that time and he came in and he says ‘where’s Robert Mitchum? I’ve to meet him for an interview’. And he says ‘well he won’t fall any further from there’. Luke Kelly says to him (laugh). ‘Leave him there he said, he can’t fall any further’ (laugh). I’ll never forget that. Luke was a fabulous bloke, but they were all the times and people were starting off. You had everybody coming in there, all the radio gangs, all the Abbey people came there, everybody came to the Red Bank, everybody. It was a great time. Vincent Dowling, Hennessy he was another great actor. You know the fella that used be on the Riordans, Sean O’Casey, he’s not Sean O’Casey. He was an old man, I can’t think of his name now it’s gone but all those people from the Abbey, they were all out of the Regal, anybody that was involved all came into the Red Bank before or after the show. I met all the greats there. Eamon Andrews, Jack Cruise, Maureen (Potter), Jimmy O’Dea and his wife used to come into the Red Bank, all the time at the counter, all the time. He wouldn’t sit at a table, he always sat up at the counter.

388.MM: You say Eamon Andrews there, it just reminds me that he bought the Dolphin (hotel) then?

389.TS: Made a cowboy shop out of it. Steaks and the girls in their American outfits – Tex-Mex and all that.

390.MM: One of the Oppermans was with him in that I think. Was that just Nugent got older or what?

391.TS: I don't know what happened there, it was just a big buy out. Montgomery was very surprised at the time when it went because like it was the start of the end, the beginning of the end. Because like, as I was saying to you, standards dropped. I mean, you think of the Dolphin, everybody went to the Dolphin, the place was packed from the racers and all this. It was a place to go and like they're all talking about the Berkley Court now and the Burlington, like what are they going to do with rugby internationals now? Before the Berkley Court, the Gresham was the place to go, the Shelbourne was the place to go. The Dolphin was the place to go. They were all the places to go for after matches and after football and after race (meetings) and everything, that's where they went. Nowhere else, but now they're gone. And that was the beginning of the end because it became a cowboy shop. You had girls going round dressed as cow girls, honest to God, little skirts and the hats and all.

392.Will you look at the time, I have to go, I'll have to be opening up shortly!

End of Interview